

# The LAY-MONK.

*Eos & accusamus & justo odio dignissimos ducimus, qui blanditiis præsentium voluptatum delinuti atq; corrupti, quos dolores, quas molestias excepturi sint, occæcati cupiditate non prævident.*  
Tull.

From MONDAY, January 18. to WEDNESDAY, January 20. 1713.

OF all Arts and Sciences, the Art, if it may be call'd so, of living happily, is of the most universal Concern. In my Third and Seventh Papers, where I have given a general Idea of my own Life and Genius, the Reader may see describ'd the Wandrings and incoherent Pursuits of a Man fluctuating in his Fancy, restless in his Designs, and determin'd in his Actions to no certain End. I have acknowledg'd, and must here repeat it, that it is to my first Acquaintance with Sir EUSTACE LOCKER that I owe the making my Life a reasonable and consistent Thing. Before which Time all the Amusements and Pleasures I had mark'd out to my self were but so many Disappointments and Suspensions of my Happiness.

I was lately turning over some Papers, among which I found a moral Discourse to this Purpose, communicated to me by my good Friend many Years ago. I immediately read it to the Society, and have their Leave for making it the Subject of this Day's Entertainment.

AS Weight or inbred Gravity is acknowledg'd by Philosophers to be the Principle of all Motion in the inanimate World, so Pleasure is the Spring that begins and governs all the Actions of Beings endow'd with Sense. As the Idea of it awakens the Instincts of Brute Creatures, so it touches and attracts the Appetites of Rational Agents; who, tho' they are free in the Choice of Means that lead to their End, yet being determin'd to Pleasure in general, they move and gravitate to it by an inevitable Impulse.

Pleasure, like Light, Sound, and other Objects of Sense, is most easily conceiv'd and understood by its own simple Term. When the Word is  
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nam'd, the Image it conveys appears strong and clear to the Mind, but is darken'd by Explanations, and weaken'd with elaborate Definitions.

Various are the Kinds of Pleasure; some arise from the agreeable Agitation of the Spirits, when the Passions adapted to give Delight are put into a regular Motion, or the Appetites are gratify'd by their proper Objects; and these are call'd Corporeal or Sensual. There is another Kind of Corporeal Pleasure, which is not commonly taken notice of, namely, the Alacrity and good Humour which spring from the Possession of Vigour and perfect Health. This is a great deal more than meer Indolence of Body, as Cicero well argues against Epicurus; for 'tis certain a Person in the full Bloom of his Youth and Strength enjoys more than one whose Spirits are benumb'd with a Palsey, or suspended from Action in a Lethargick Sleep; who, notwithstanding, has all Epicurus's Happiness of Body, that consists in Absence of Pain. Other Pleasures result from surprizing Turns and Strains of Wit, from the Sport and Play of Fancy, and from the bright Scenes of a sprightly Imagination.

But greater yet proceed from the Exercise of the superior Faculties of the Mind, the Understanding and Will; of which the first has Truth, the latter Goodness for its Object. The Philosopher, who is taken up in sublime Speculations, and in searching the Causes of Things, and thinks he has unravell'd some perplex'd Threads, and brought to light some mysterious Conduct of Nature; as well as the Divine, who by long Study believes he has at last found the right Decision of some abstruse Point of Theology, are in Raptures of Joy for the happy Discovery.

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But the highest Pleasure of which Man is capable arises from the Operation of the Will when it embraces its proper Object, Goodness. This is the Foundation of Moral Excellence and human Happiness, and therefore *Epicurus* has stupidly made the Supreme Good to consist in a lazy Indolence of Body and supine Tranquility of Mind, for those only remove the Impediments, but by no Means express the Constitution of Man's Felicity: Perhaps he thought the exerting our rational Faculties was to be accounted Pain and Labour, whereas on the contrary the Exercise of regular Intellectual Powers attended with Delight and Complacency, is by no Means Labour, but active Quiet.

'Tis true such is the vitiated Taste of the greater Part of Mankind, that few can relish any Enjoyments, but such as gratify their Appetites, and therefore corporeal Satisfaction has almost appropriated the Name of Pleasure. These universally engage and captivate us, and not only as they are more suitable to deprav'd Nature, but as they take Possession of our Hearts by their early Addresses and first Acquaintance.

'Tis therefore a fruitless Attempt to dissuade Men from the Pursuits of these Pleasures, unless you offer them greater in Exchange, for human Nature is so made, as before suggested, that it cannot be attracted by any Object, but as it appears agreeable, and more so than others, if more than one court our Choice. To prevail then with Men to relinquish Criminal Delights, you must convince them they shall receive more Pleasure in the Practice of Virtue, and then they will agree, as of two Evils the least is to be chosen, so of two Pleasures the greatest should have the Preference.

The Pleasures of the Body are incomparably inferior to the solid Satisfaction, serene Joy, and inexpressible Complacency, that result from the Exercise of our superior Faculties. If we reflect, we cannot but be convinced that the Capacities of the Soul, which bear so great an Affinity to the Nature of Angels, were design'd to give us far greater Delight, than those Corporeal Appetites which we have in common with unintelligent Animals. For since the Dignity and Superiority of our Being arise from our Rational Powers, 'tis evident that the most refin'd and sublime Pleasures must result from the most exalted and regular Action of those Powers; which is but in other Words to express a State of Bliss and Perfection.

Whoever chuses the Favour and Fruition of the Supreme Being as his Happiness, and makes it the prevailing End of his Actions, to please his beneficent Author, will soon find such a Difference between Intellectual and Sensual Delights, that he will reject the last, as unworthy of a Creature endow'd with Reason, and with an elevated Capacity of contemplating and possessing the Fountain of all Perfection.

The Practice of Virtue, with this View, delivers a Man from that Uneasiness and self Displeasure, that Dissatisfaction and Remorse, which are the Fruits of forbidden Enjoyments: It removes his secret Fears and Misgivings, and calms the Perturbations and Anguish of his Heart. A guiltless Man is at Peace with himself, and feels a delightful Harmony, and a regular Subordination of his Superior and Inferior Faculties: He is pleas'd when he reflects upon his Life, and applauds himself for acting as becomes a Being of Intellectual Endowments: He cannot but taste a secret Pleasure to see himself freed from that Servitude to Vice, to which so many voluntary Slaves submit, and from a painful Drudgery in making Provision for exorbitant Appetites, which however does not mitigate but encrease their Thirst. A Man of Christian Honour and Virtue, by subduing the Fears of his Dissolution, has laid the only Foundation of Happiness in this Life. And while he steadfastly contemplates that Felicity, which is the certain Expectation of good Men; it is impossible for him not to feel those Transports of Joy, which are the Anticipations of a happy Immortality.

Nothing more disparages the Enjoyments of Libertines, than this Observation, that they will not endure to be coolly consider'd, nor abide the Test of good Sense. Let any Man, who has made the Tryal, declare whether greater and more solid Pleasure does not proceed from the Conquest of an inordinate Inclination, than from the Gratification of it. A Principle of Virtue, by restraining our Appetites, bounding our Desires, and governing our Passions, by raising our Thoughts above the low Aims of Ambition and Avarice, and bringing the Soul to one Point, the Acquisition of Immortal Happiness, extinguishes in it all Anxiety and Sorrow, settles it in Tranquility, and fills it with unspeakable Satisfaction. A Man in this Condition is sequester'd from the Affairs of common Life, as if he had drawn in his Effects, broken off Commerce with the World, and was retir'd with the inestimable Possession of a Mind at Rest.

And as this establishes Peace in his Breast, so it makes him easy and chearful in Conversation; you see him perpetually in good Humour, and may discern his inward Satisfaction breaking out in his Aspect, his Behaviour, his Discourse, and in all the Expressions of Humanity and good Will to others.

Were this consider'd, it would remove the Prejudices which arise from false Representations, and Notions injurious to Virtue, and unworthy of Religion. It would convince Men, that when they are solicited to forego forbidden Enjoyments, there is no Design to seduce them into a sad and fullen State of Life, but on the contrary to persuade them only to relinquish some Pleasures, for the Sake of much greater, and more permanent.

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